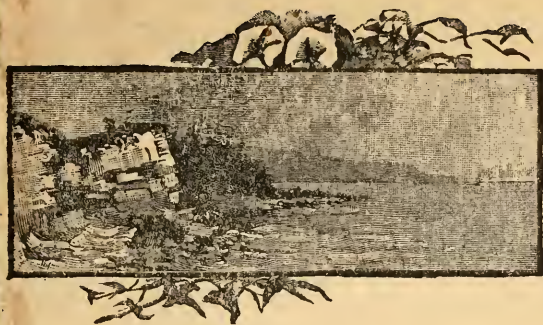




UPPER MISSISSIPPI
SKETCHES

The Battle of
Campbell's Island



F

E 356
.C2 M3
Copy 2



Class E 356

Book .C2 M3
copy 2

Upper Mississippi Sketches

The Battle of Campbell's Island

WILLIAM A. MEESE

Aug 2nd 1882

E356
.C2M3
copy 2

By transfer

22 Ap '05

ol



THE BATTLE GROUND.

Object of This Sketch.

Some years ago, when I first read an account of the engagement on July 19, 1814, between the Americans and Black Hawk's band at Campbell's Island, I became anxious to learn more of the particulars. I was disappointed in finding but slight if any mention of this affair in the histories of our country. One history of Illinois devotes a little over a page to this battle, and another about a page and a half. These are the most extended notices that this battle has ever received. Since reading my first account, I have from time to time found mention of this engagement, and in the following pages I present such information as I have secured.

This sketch is not intended as an expression of opinion on the merits or demerits of any person connected with this engagement; it is simply a compilation of facts, arranged and put together, so that any who may be interested in this event, can secure such information as I have been able to gather, without going to the trouble of consulting numerous authorities, most of which are beyond the reach of the ordinary reader.

I wish to here thank General F. C. Ainsworth, the Military Secretary, for his courtesy in securing for me a copy of the official report of this battle, made by General Benjamin Howard to Hon. John Armstrong, Secretary of War, and copies of the official reports of this battle made by Lieutenants Campbell and Riggs, to their commanding officer, General Benjamin Howard. These reports clear up a great deal that has heretofore been but mere conjecture, and add much that was heretofore unknown.

WILLIAM A. MEESE.

Moline, Illinois,
July 4, 1904.

Campbell's Island.

Among the hundreds of islands lying in the Mississippi river, those of the upper Mississippi seem to have been more favored by nature, and among all the many beautiful islands, the two most favored spots are Rock Island and Campbell's Island. The former was in early days selected by the United States Government as a military post, and is today the seat of the largest arsenal in our country.

Campbell's Island is six miles east of Moline, for many years it was owned by private parties, and its surface, that was once trod by the Red man, was for many years used for agricultural purposes.

This island was the home of the grape; so thickly were its trees clustered with these vines, that it almost seems as though nature had selected this island as the central vineyard of the upper Mississippi valley. The birds also found the island a pleasing mating ground, for they have always been found more plentiful on Campbell's trees than at any other place in this region.

Here the Red man came to gather the fruit so liked by his people, and here, too, was one of his favored resorts where he was wont to come to win the finney tribe that made their home along its sandy shores.

Today the island is the property of the Mississippi Valley Traction Company, and they have connected it with the city of Moline by an interurban electric street car line, and thrown its two hundred and fifty broad acres, covered with beautiful groves, and lined with sandy shores, open to the seekers after pleasure and health.

On the north shore is a beach of sand, whose whiteness rivals the sands of the ocean. These sands, and the trees that grow along the shore and cast their shadows far out over the broad Mississippi, are all that remain as memories of that eventful day when the American, bound on his mission "to keep the peace," was waylaid by the cruel and misguided savages, and innocent blood was shed to render more crimson the story of border warfare.

The shore of Campbell's Island is historic and holy ground, and it is hoped that at some early day, our legislature, when this body is enacting laws, will not forget to erect a suitable monument on Campbell's shores to mark the spot where American blood was shed in defense of its country in the war of 1812.

Early Settlements.

Although the upper Mississippi was explored in 1673 by the Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette and his companion, Louis Joliet, and after

them by numerous other hardy Frenchmen, there were few settlements north of St. Louis until after the war of 1812.

The upper Mississippi region was almost unknown, nothing had ever been published concerning it, save Lieut. Zebulon M. Pike's report of the expedition he made by order of the government in 1805-7, and the occasional vague and exaggerated reports of hunters and boatmen.

Today this Valley is considered the center of civilization of the United States; at the breaking out of the war of 1812, it was known as the "far west;" Illinois territory then contained only about nine thousand inhabitants.

St. Louis was the largest city or settlement on the Mississippi north of New Orleans, and contained less than three thousand inhabitants. The only other settlements on the upper river were:

Cape au Gris (also called Capais Grais) a French hamlet in Illinois on the left bank of the Mississippi river, a few miles north of the mouth of the Illinois river, where was a promontory of grit or sandstone, directly across from which on the western shore in 1813, a log fort, known as Cape au Gris Fort was erected, and which during the year 1814, was commanded by Captain David Musick, with a company of Missouri rangers. (1)

Dubuque's lead mine, a small settlement at or near where the city of Dubuque, Iowa, now is, where in 1788, a French Canadian, named Julien Dubuque, obtained from the Sac Indians, a grant of land on the west bank of the Mississippi.

Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, a small village containing about one hundred families of French Canadians, mostly traders, who had purchased the site from the Indians about 1783, and most of whom had married Indian wives.

Fort Madison, Iowa, which had been built in 1808, had been abandoned in the early part of November, 1813.

Causes of the War of 1812.

The treaty of Paris, made in 1783, in which Great Britain acknowledged "the freedom, sovereignty and independence of the United States" was virtually a truce, and not a full adjustment of the difficulties existing between Great Britain and the United States. In that treaty Great Britain agreed to surrender certain forts in the northwest territory, but many of the forts in this territory were retained, among them Detroit, Michilmackinac, Niagara and others.

1. Wisconsin Historical Series, Vol. 2, page 209.

Shortly after the cessation of hostilities, the British began inciting the Indians against the Americans. President Washington, as early as 1794, in speaking of British interference in the northwest territory, said: "For there does not remain a doubt in the mind of any well informed person in this country, not shut against conviction, that all the difficulties we encounter with the Indians, their hostilities, the murders of helpless women and children along our frontiers, result from the conduct of the agents of Great Britain in this country." He further said: "Seducing from our alliance tribes that have hitherto been kept in peace and friendship with us at a heavy expense, they keep in a state of irritation the tribes that are hostile to us, and are instigating those who know little of us. It is an undeniable fact that they are furnishing the whole with arms, ammunition, clothing and even provisions to carry on the war. I might go further, and if they are not belied, add *men* also, in disguise. * * * It will be impossible to keep this country in a state of amity with Great Britain as long as these forts are not surrendered." (1)

The French traders at Prairie du Chien lost no opportunity to incite the Indians against the Americans, partly to monopolize their trade and partly to secure their friendship in case a war should break out between the United States and England.

In 1811, N. Boilvin, United States Indian agent, at Prairie du Chien, wrote the Secretary of War, William Eustis, of the feeling of the French and British traders toward the American traders, and urged the government to erect a fort at Prairie du Chien, which, owing to its central position, would put an end to the intercourse between the Canadian and British traders and the Indians, and which would end the discrimination against the American trader. (2)

During the year 1811, Robert Dickson, an English trader at Prairie du Chien, had been active in gathering together, between three and four thousand Indian warriors with which to attack the frontiers of Missouri and Illinois, but these forces were more needed in the early part of 1812 in Canada, and the west was probably thus saved a bloody border war. (3)

The British traders continued openly to display their ill will toward the Americans and their government secretly incited the Red man against our people. After the declaration of war against Great Britain, most of the Indians of the northwest territory openly sided with Great Britain.

When on June 18, 1812, the American Congress declared war against the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and their dependencies, it was not only on account of the grievances we had against Great Britain for searching our ships and harassing our merchant marine, but

1. Letter of President Washington to John Jay.

2. Illinois. (The Edwards Papers) pages 59 to 63.

3. Smith's History of Wisconsin, Vol. I, page 237.

also owing to the British interference upon our frontier. This declaration of war was forced upon our government by the long continued acts of injustice suffered by our country.

The Sacs and Foxes.

The upper Mississippi Valley, from the Missouri to the Wisconsin river, was the home of the Sac and Fox Indians, of whom, in 1812, there were about twelve hundred warriors. These Indians were closely allied, and while not one tribe, acted in concert. They were a warlike people who had fought their way from the St. Lawrence river to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where they remained for some years and sustained themselves against hostile tribes. Sometime between the years 1728 and 1746, they removed to the lower Rock river and upper Mississippi Valley region, driving away from this country and eventually almost exterminating the Illini confederacy of Indians who had up to this time occupied the hunting grounds of western Illinois. The Sacs and Foxes have warred with the Sioux, Pawnee, Osage, Cherokees, and other fierce warriors of the west and successfully held their own. The Foxes' principal villages being on the west side of the Mississippi river, while the Sacs inhabited what is now Illinois, the latter had their principal village on the east side of the peninsula formed by the meeting of the Rock and Mississippi rivers, about a mile above the mouth of Rock river, and about three miles south of Rock Island, in the Mississippi, and in 1810, it consisted of nearly two hundred lodges and had a population of some two thousand people. The Sacs and Foxes cultivated over two thousand acres of the fertile land lying between and at the junction of the Rock and the Mississippi rivers, raising beans, pumpkins, squash and corn, but mostly the latter, and in the early days of the nineteenth century they sold corn to the white people living in the upper Mississippi valley. (1). This village was Black Hawk's home until the year 1832, when he and the last of his people were forcibly removed west on the Mississippi.

The Sacs and Foxes were always friendly toward the English, and at the commencement of the war of 1812, a large number of them, mostly Sacs, under Black Hawk's leadership, fought with the British. This party, or band, after that was always called the "British band."

The Rangers.

In 1812, Congress, largely through the effort of Shadrock Bond, then territorial delegate in Congress and afterward Governor of Illinois, passed

1. Wisconsin Historical Series, Vol. XI, page 112.

an act calling for the organization of ten companies of Territorial Rangers, four companies being assigned to Indiana, three to Missouri, and three to guard the Illinois frontier. (1)

These Rangers were a hardy lot, accustomed to frontier life, to endure hardships and privations, and they became a most valuable acquisition to the small force of regular soldiers stationed on our frontier.

Benjamin Howard was Governor of Missouri Territory in 1813, but resigned his office and was appointed Brigadier-General, serving from March 12, 1813, up to the time of his death, which occurred at St. Louis, on September 18, 1814. Howard had command of the Rangers of Illinois and Missouri Territories, known as the Eighth Military Department.

The First Expedition.

So emboldened had the Indians become, and so grave the fear of an invasion by the British and Indians upon our northwestern frontier, that Nimian Edwards, Territorial Governor of Illinois, on March 27, 1813, wrote the Secretary of War: "If the British erect a fort at the mouth of the Wisconsin, and should be able to retain it two years, this, and Missouri Territory will be totally deserted; in other words, conquered."

At the beginning of the year 1814, it was decided to take measures whereby the Indians of the upper Mississippi river could be controlled.

The first operation decided on, was to build a fort at the village of Prairie du Chien. General Howard being absent, Governor Clark of Missouri, fitted out an expedition of one hundred and forty men, mostly of the Seventh Regiment of Rangers, and sent them up the Mississippi in five armed barges or keel boats.

Prairie du Chien at that time, was in the possession of the British. Twenty days before Clark's expedition reached the place, Dickson, the trader, left for Macinac with some three hundred Indians. Dickson had gained information of the American expedition through his Indian spies, and left Captain Deace, a British officer, with a small body of Fencibles (volunteers) and a few Sioux and Fox Indians to guard the place. (2)

Governor Clark's expedition left St. Louis about May first. At the mouth of Rock river, the Governor says, he met some disaffected Sacs and Foxes upon whom he fired; some canoes were taken, with the arms of the affrighted savages, who sued for peace on any terms. These Indians were Foxes and lived at Dubuque. Peace was promised them on condition they would join against the enemies of the United States and immediately commence hostilities against the Winnebagos, which they agreed to do.

1. Illinois. (The Edwards Papers) pages 93 to 97.
2. Annals of the West, (1857) page 911.

Upon arriving at Prairie du Chien, the Sioux and Fox Indians refused to fight the Americans; the inhabitants fled and they were followed by the British garrison. Clark took possession of the village, and Lieutenant Joseph Perkins, who was acting ensign, with sixty men, occupied the house of the Macinac Fur Company, in which they found nine trunks of Dickson's property, containing his papers and correspondence. They immediately set about to build a fort, which when completed, was named, Fort Shelby, in honor of Governor Shelby, of Kentucky. (1)

Governor Clark, with several gentlemen who had accompanied him on the expedition, together with Captain John Sullivan and his company of militia whose term of office (sixty days) had expired, returned to St. Louis in one of the barges about the 13th of June, leaving Lieutenant Perkins in command, also leaving the two largest gunboats, one of which had been named "Governor Clark." Captain John Sullivan and Captain Yeizer were left in command of the boats. (2)

These gun boats were nothing more than keel boats, strongly fortified, and supplied with six pounders and howitzers. The men being protected by a musket proof barricade.

Upon Governor Clark's return to St. Louis, he was tendered a public ovation, all of the citizen turning out and welcoming him as a hero, but subsequent information and events ruthlessly deprived him of his easily won military glory. (3)

The last of June, Captain John Sullivan, with a company of militia and some volunteers whose term of service had expired, arrived in St. Louis with one gunboat. This left Lieutenant Perkins, with only sixty men, and the gunboat "Governor Clark," and her crew, commanded by Captain Yeizer, to guard the new fort.

Upon the return of General Howard to St. Louis from a visit to Kentucky, and learning that Governor Clark had left with Lieutenant Perkins, only a small number of men with which to complete the fort and hold it against the attacks of the British and the Indians, and realizing the importance of this post, and its danger, he immediately ordered another expedition fitted out which should bring relief to the weakened garrison at Fort Shelby.

Keel Boats.

The keel boat used in these days was a large covered boat, or barge, having a cabin extending above the deck; the sides of the cabin being far enough in from the gun wale to allow a passage way along the outside of the deck. These boats were used to carry merchandise and passengers

1. Niles' Register, Vol. VI, page 426.
2. Annals of the West, (1857) page 913.
3. Davidson & Stuve's History of Illinois. page 279.

and were propelled by poles and oars. Some had sails, and when so equipped, the bottom of the boat was supplied with a keel, from which the boats took the name of keel boats.

Campbell's Expedition.

On July 4, 1814, the second expedition left Cape au Gris. It consisted of three fortified barges, or keel boats, each with a cabin and all having sails. There were thirty-three regular soldiers and sixty-five rangers, some of the latter being Frenchmen from Cahokia. The expedition including the sutlers establishment, boatmen, and women and children, making one hundred and thirty-three persons. This expedition was commanded by Lieutenant (acting Brigade Major) John Campbell of the First Regulars (infantry), who with the contractors and sutlers, women and children, occupied one boat. The two other boats being occupied by the Rangers and were commanded by Lieutenant Stephen Rector, and Lieutenant Jonathan Riggs. The number of Regulars in this expedition has been repeatedly given as forty-two; Major Campbell, however, reports that he had but thirty-three.

On the thirteenth of the month, about eighty miles below the mouth of Rock river, they met a party of Indians from Prairie du Chien, with a packet directed to Governor Clark. These Indians informed Campbell that everything was quiet, and that the garrison at the Prairie had been completed. The same day Lieutenant Rector, of the Rangers found a canoe which had a considerable quantity of Indian property in it, and which had just been abandoned. (1)

On the eighteenth of July, about twenty miles below Rock river, the expedition was met by a party of nine Indians in canoes, bearing a white flag, who informed Major Campbell that they had heard of the American's approach and had come to conduct them to their own town, and to inform them that the Sacs and Foxes were friendly disposed. The Indians left the keel boats a few miles below the mouth of Rock river, at the mouth of which the boats were met by five other Indians in canoes, who informed the commander that the Indians at the village on Rock River, about a mile above its mouth wished to hold a council with him. The keel boats proceeded up the river and landed on the Illinois shore opposite the lower end of Rock Island. In a short time, about one hundred and fifty warriors, besides women and children of the Sac and Fox nation appeared. Black Hawk was at the head of the party. He approached Major Campbell and asked if he had brought any presents for him from his father. Major Campbell told Black Hawk he

1. Official report of Lieutenant Campbell to General Howard.

had, provided he fulfilled the promises he had made his father in the spring, which was to go to war with the Peaus (Winnebagos.) Black Hawk replied that he had made his father no such promises, and that his "father was drunk when he said so," but that he was ready to go to war with the Peaus if the government would furnish him with the means. He further said: "The Mississippi is a broad and straight road and the people of the United States shall meet with no obstructions in traveling." (1)

During the evening the Indians were very friendly, recognizing many old friends among the Frenchmen from Cahokia.

The Battle of Campbell's Island.

On the morning of July 19, before breakfast, the boats all set sail and started up the river, with a fine breeze. During the night a party of Indians arrived at the Sac village from Prairie du Chien, coming down Rock river bringing the Sacs six kegs of powder and telling them that the fort at Prairie du Chien had been captured by the British. These messengers told the Sacs that the British wished them to again join them in the war against the Americans, which the Indians agreed to do.

Black Hawk's memory is at fault, he does not state exactly what these Indian messengers told him. Colonel McKay, whose army of British and Indians had attacked Prairie du Chien, in a letter to his superior officer, under date of July 27, 1814, says that on the seventeenth of July about three o'clock in the afternoon, after the gun boat "Governor Clark" had been driven from its position by the British cannon and had started down the river, that he immediately sent off a canoe with three men, an Iowan, who had come from Mackinac with him, and two of the six Sauks, who had joined him on the Fox river, that he gave them four kegs of gun powder and ordered them to pass the "Governor Clark" and get as soon as possible to the Rapids at the Rock river, where he believed the gun boat would run aground; that they should collect all the Sauks and annoy the "Governor Clark" and prevent their landing to get fire wood, etc. (2)

Black Hawk collected his warriors and determined to attack the boats which had now started up the river, as Black Hawk says: "I collected my warriors and determined to pursue the boats, I immediately started with my party by land, in pursuit, thinking that some of their boats might get aground, or that the GREAT SPIRIT would put them in our power, if he wished them taken." (3)

1. Official report of Lieutenant Campbell to General Howard.
2. Wisconsin Historical Series, Vol. XI, pages 264 to 268.
3. Autobiography of Black Hawk, (1834) page 57.

The boats had just passed the head of Rock Island, when the boat commanded by Major Campbell was grounded on the rocks, and he was compelled to discharge and put off part of her loading into the other boats before he could release his boat.

After proceeding about six miles the wind increased to a hurricane. Campbell's boat being still heavily loaded he says: "I was afraid of her dashing to pieces on the rocks, and ordered her to be put to shore, which in doing from the severe gale of wind which was blowing, and the roughness of the water dashed her so hard on shore it was impossible to get her off while the storm lasted." The boat was driven on the north shore of an island lying about six miles east of Moline and which since that day has been known as Campbell's Island. It lies near the eastern shore and belongs to the state of Illinois.

Black Hawk says, "About half way up the rapids I had a full view of the boats, all sailing with a strong wind, I soon discovered one boat badly managed and was suffered to be driven ashore, by the wind, they landed by running hard aground, and lowered their sail, the others passed on."

The ground where the boat landed was covered with high grass, hazel and willow bushes for a considerable distance up and down the shore. Campbell immediately placed two sentinels about sixty yards from the boats, and the men commenced getting their breakfast.

They had not been on the Island more than twenty-five or thirty minutes when the Indians commenced their attack, both sentinels were killed the first fire, and one other man on shore. Campbell ordered the cable cut and the boat to be gotten off, in doing of which two men were killed and three wounded. Finding the gale blowed directly on land, and that it was impossible to get her off, he ordered his men to defend the boat to the last extremity. (1)

The boats of Lieutenants Rector and Riggs were about three miles up the river at this time, Lieutenant Riggs' boat being in advance he heard the report of the firing and saw the smoke rising from where Campbell's boat lay, he tacked his boat and signalled Rector, who tacked his boat and both sailed for Campbell's boat. Rector's boat being the first to reach the scene of the battle. Savages were seen among the trees and bushes, and a large number of Indians were seen coming in canoes from the eastern shore. It was estimated that about four hundred Indians surrounded them. The savages commenced giving their war-whoop and pouring in on them a fire of musketry and arrows. Major Campbell's right wrist was fractured by a musket ball

1. Official report of Lieutenant Campbell.

during the first onslaught, and he was carried into the cabin of his boat and laid on a bunk, while his men gallantly returned the fire of the Indians.

Campbell's boat was so near the bank that the Indians were able to fire in at the port oar holes. The storm had now become so violent that it was fully an hour before the other boats were able to come to Campbell's assistance.

Riggs' boat was driven ashore about one hundred yards below Campbell's boat, and Rector to avoid a similiar fate, had let go an anchor, and lay about twenty yards above Campbell's boat, the rangers from both barges kept up a brisk fire on the Indians.

This unequal contest waged for several hours, when the firing from Campbell's boat becoming less frequent, led Lieutenant Rector to believe that most of Campbell's men were either killed or wounded.

Riggs' boat was the best fortified, but his crew had been weakened. When Campbell's boat was stranded on the rocks he sent a sergeant and ten men to help him off, and Campbell did not return the men.

Rector's boat had among its crew many of the French from Cahokia who were experienced sailors. The wind was still a raging tempest, and the fire of the Indians was becoming more destructive to the boats ; at this time Black Hawk says : " I prepared my bow and arrows to throw fire to the sail, which was laying on the boat, and after two or three attempts succeeded in setting the sail on fire." (1) Campbell's boat was soon in flames. Lieutenant Rector could not remain inactive and witness the horrible death of Campbell and his companions. In the face of the tempest and the galling fire of the foe, he cut his anchors, a number of his men got out into the water, keeping the boat between them and the Indians, they pushed their boat against the fire of the Indians up to Campbell's boat. The wounded in Campbell's boat were first transferred to Rector's boat, and then those who were unhurt ; so loaded was Rector's boat that the water was running in at the oar holes and almost all of their provisions were thrown overboard to lighten the boat. The Indians all the time kept up a murderous fire. In taking the men from Campbell's boat the Major was shot through the body. Black Hawk in his autobiography states at this time : "We wounded the war chief."

Rector's men still in the water, and keeping the boat between them and the Indians, hauled their boat out into the stream, swimming alongside of the boat until the channel was reached and the boat had been carried out of gunshot, when they climbed into the boat. Rector's

1. Autobiography of Black Hawk, (1834) page 57.

boat was crowded, but the men took to their oars and rowed night and day until they reached St. Louis.

The casualties were: killed on Campbell's boat, ten regulars, one woman and one child; on Rector's boat, one ranger; and on Riggs' boat, three rangers; a total of sixteen.

Wounded on Campbell's boat, ten regulars and one woman; on Rector's boat, four rangers; and on Rigg's boat four rangers, also Major Campbell and Dr. Stewart, the garrison surgeon, who was shot in the breast; a total of twenty-one, making the total casualties thirty-seven. All fought with the courage of heroes. Rector and his men risked their lives to save their comrades, and the battle at Campbell's Island has no equal for daring and heroism during the war of 1812 in the West.

Lieutenant John Weaver, of the Regulars, who was second in command on Campbell's boat acted bravely, it was largely by his exertions that the wounded were safely transferred to Rector's boat.

Almost all of the ammunition for the expedition and the supplies for Fort Shelby, except a box of musket balls, was on Campbell's boat and was captured by Black Hawk, nothing was saved. The Regulars fought with their shirts off, and saved only their arms and fatigue overalls.

Official Reports.

Major Campbell, in his report says, "I am much indebted to Lieutenant Rector of the rangers for his prompt obedience my orders to his coolness may be attributed the saving of the lives of the few men that remained on board the boat that was on fire."

Lieutenant Riggs in his report says that as he neared Campbell's boat he saw a British flag on the shore and attempted to halt opposite, but that the wind was so violent that he was driven quite ashore in spite of his anchor, he then opened fire on the enemy at a distance of about thirty paces, but that his boat had stranded in such an awkward position that they were very much on the alert to defend themselves. During the engagement a man jumped out of Campbell's boat and swam toward Riggs'. He was shot and killed. After Rector's boat had taken on Campbell's men and had gotten away she was about a mile down stream before Riggs' discovered it, he says:

"We then discovered that the Major had gone on board of Lieutenant Rector's boat and gone off, and was actually about a mile down the river without giving us any orders, or notice of his departure. We discovered the boat to be on fire and Indians attempted to board her, which we prevented by our well directed fire. We attempted to

change our position and get off if possible, but could not, but drifted up between the stern of the Major's boat that was on fire and the shore. We again exerted ourselves and fell into a better position. Our swivel now could bear upon the Major's boat. The Indians had boarded her and put out the fire. We soon dislodged them. They rallied a second time, and were repulsed with considerable loss by our small arms; they made an attempt to board us but only three had the bravery to reach the boat, two of them escaped, the third we detained in this situation. We fought until half an hour by sun, when the Indians ceased firing and the wind abated, we pushed off. As soon as they discovered us going they commenced a heavy fire from the shore and kept it up in chase until dark. I believe that if I had been aided only by Lieutenant Rector's boat I could have brought off the Major's boat, for after the second repulse they did not dare return whilst we stayed. The next day I landed and buried the dead with the honors of war (as well as we could)." (1)

Riggs shows the soldier and true hero, in closing his report he says, "I beg also to recommend my brave companions to your remembrance for I candidly confess that until that day I never knew the extent of the bravery of man." Black Hawk in his books says of Riggs: "I had a good opinion of this War Chief—he managed so much better than the others. It would give me pleasure to shake him by the hand."

Rector's boat with Campbell's men arrived at St. Louis first and when the news spread that Lieutenant Riggs and his men had been left on the Rock Island rapids, fighting the Indians, it was feared that all were captured by the Indians and when Riggs' boat later arrived at St. Louis on the twenty-sixth, there was great rejoicing and the occasion for a general jubilee. The entire company presented a distressing sight. Those not wounded were worn down to skeletons by labor and fatigue. (2)

Black Hawk Celebrates.

After Riggs' boat had gone, Black Hawk's men began to plunder Campbell's boat. The first thing that the Chief did was to knock the head in of several barrels of whisky, which he termed "*Bad Medicine*" and emptied their contents on the ground. He says, "I next found a box full of small bottles and packages, which appeared to be *Bad Medicine* also; such as the *medicine men* kill the white people with when they get sick, this I threw into the river." (3) The rest of the

1. Official report of Lieutenant Riggs
2. Reynolds, ("My Own Times") page 101.
3. Autobiography of Black Hawk, page 59.

plunder, which consisted of guns, clothing, provisions, powder, etc. was loaded into their canoes and taken to the Fox village opposite the lower end of Rock Island, where Davenport now is. Before leaving the Indians took the scalp from Campbell's five dead regulars, and as Black Hawk said when he got to the Fox village, "We commenced dancing over the scalps we had taken."

Black Hawk's opinion of whisky as a medicine must have changed over night, because he does not complain at the soldiers giving to him and his men, whisky the evening before, yet the next day he thought it "Bad Medicine."

While Black Hawk and his Indians were dancing over their scalps several boats passed down the river, among them a large boat "carrying big guns." These boats were the "Governor Clark" and the contractor's and sutler's barges from Prairie du Chien, which garrison Campbell's expedition was intending to strengthen, but which had been attacked by the British under Col. McKay, on the seventeenth, two days previous.

Captain Yeizer and his gun boats leaving Prairie du Chien during the afternoon on the first day of the attack and started for St. Louis, leaving Lieutenant Perkins and his command, which consisted of sixty men, together with two women and one child, to hold the fort which surrendered July 20, after a four day's siege. (1)

Press Reports.

After the return of the expedition to St. Louis the following account appeared in a newspaper at that place:

"Lieutenant Rector, after a contest of two hours and twenty minutes withdrew to a favorable position, which enabled him to save the few regular troops so well from the flames, which surrounded them, as the fury of the savages, the high wind which then prevailed, and the loss of his anchors, prevented his rendering a like assistance to Lieutenant Riggs. The later though stranded and in a hopeless situation kept up an incessant fire on the Indians, and by a *ruse de guerre* afforded his party an opportunity of making the savages feel some of the consequences of their perfidy. He ordered his men to cease firing for about ten minutes, and at the same time ordered howitzers to be well loaded with grape and small arms to be in readiness. The Indians believing the rangers to be all killed, or that they had surrendered, rushed down the bank to extinguish the fire on Lieutenant Campbell's barge, and to board Riggs. Our hero then opened upon them a well directed fire,

which drove them in all directions, leaving several of their dead behind." (1)

Unjust Criticism.

Major Campbell has by some writers been criticized for the defeat of his troops at the Battle of Campbell's Island, some claiming that he did not place pickets to guard his camp, others that he was warned of a threatened attack by the Indians and disregarded the warning, and others that he was inexperienced, one write says:

"The officers being unacquainted with Indian manners imagined the savages to be friendly, to this fatal security may be attributed the catastrophe." (2)

Another says: "Many of the French, after the battle informed me that they knew the Indians would attack the boats, and accordingly they informed Lieutenant Campbell, but he disbelieved them. The French said that the Indians wanted them to leave the Americans and go home. They would squeeze the hands of the French, and pull their hands down the river, indicating to leave. The Indians disliked to fight their old friends, the French." (3) While still another said, "Lieutenant Campbell disobeyed orders, was heedless, kept out no spies." (4)

The first statement is not correct, Major Campbell was an experienced soldier, and had seen over six years of service at this time. As to his being notified of a threatened attack and that the Indians were unfriendly is evidently incorrect. Black Hawk himself says that Campbell's expedition was well received at Rock Island and that he and his band had no intention of hurting him or any of his party at this time, and that they could easily have defeated him, had the Indians intended any injury to Campbell's party it would have been much easier to have attacked them while the Americans were encamped at Rock Island than to have followed them up the river, not knowing when or where the Americans would land, and probably landing on the opposite shore to where the Indians were and where they had no means of crossing the river. After an occurrence of this kind, there are always those who "knew before." As to Campbell's disobeying orders and not placing out pickets. I believe Campbell when he says, "I placed two pickets." He reported to his superior General Howard, that pickets were placed, and were it a fact, that he omitted to place pickets, Lieutenant Weaver, and others who were on

1. Missouri (St. Louis) Gazette, July 30, 1814.

2. Missouri (St. Louis) Gazette, July 30, 1814.

3. Reynolds, ("My Own Times") page 99.

4. Wisconsin Historical Series, Vol. XI, page 200, and Davison & Stuve's History of Illinois, page 279.

Campbell's boat would have reported such a gross neglect of military duty.

The Campbell's Island engagement rightly portrays the Sac and Fox Indians; Bancroft says of them, "A nation passionate and untamable, springing up into new life from every defeat, and though reduced in the number of their warriors, yet present every where by their ferocious enterprise and savage daring." It can truly be said of this people, they made peace one day and unhesitatingly broke it the next. It was Indian warfare. The ambush and surprise.

Indian Losses.

Black Hawk, says, that he had but two of his band killed in this engagement, and while we have no historic data to contradict him, it is safe to say in view of all the information obtainable that an engagement of this moment lasting from ten o'clock in the forenoon, until six in the evening and where the Americans had sixteen killed and twenty-one wounded, that the Indians must have suffered quite a loss.

Black Hawk's autobiograephy is generally quite truthful and accurate, but it is Indian character to magnify personal victories and to remain silent or forgetful of personal defeat.

Major Campbell says, "The enemy must have suffered considerably as the fire was returned without the least intermission and we frequently raked the banks with our swivel."

The Indian report of this engagement, was a highly colored account; Colonel McKay in his report to Colonel McDouall, his commanding officer states that some days after the battle some of the Sauks came up from Rock river, stating that they had attacked six barges containing Americans, that they killed one hundred persons and captured, among other things five pieces of cannon, he ends his report by saying "This is perhaps one of the most brilliant actions fought by Indians only since the commencement of the war." (1)

The Derelict.

Lieutenant Campbell's boat lay for many years on the north shore, of Campbell's Island, just below where the present bathing establishment now stands. Benjamin Goble, an old settler often told of seeing the hull inbedded in the sand. He says:

"Soon after Stephens left, two men named Smith, took possession of his claim, there were two cabins on it; but neither had a floor.

1. Wisconsin Historical Series, Vol. XI, page 264.

The river was low, so that the hull of the barge burned by the Indians at the time of Campbell's defeat in 1812, (a mistake, it was 1814) was plainly visible. The Smiths got the hull a shore, found the planks in a good state of preservation and floored their cabins with them." (1) This was in 1829. The Stephens whom he mentions was a planter from the South, who located where Walker Station, two miles east of Moline, now is, and who brought with him some twenty slaves. This addition to the population of Rock Island county so incensed the settlers, that Joseph Danforth in October, 1829, went to Galena (there being no magistrate nearer) and procured a warrant for Stephens arrest. The latter learning of this, took his slaves and started south on a flat boat. This was the first and last time, that slaves were ever tried to be introduced, into Rock Isladd county. Although in early days officers stationed at Fort Armstrong and coming from the South brought black bond men as servants.

A Conflict of Dates.

The date of the Battle of Campbell's Island has been a mooted question, some authorities give it as July 19, and some as July 21, 1814.

Lieutenant Campbell in his official report to General Howard sent from St. Louis and dated July 24, 1814, speaks of it as occuring on the twenty-first of July, and Lieutenant Riggs in his report to General Howard from Dardienne, dated July 26, 1814, refers to it as "the attack upon us on the twenty-first instance" ordinarily this should settle the question and fix the date as July 21, but the records of the War Department give it July 19 1814.

It is possible that both Lieutenants Campbell and Riggs were mistaken as to the date. They of course being among the principal actors should under ordinary circumstances know, but in those times when away from civilization, men did not keep a record as is done today, and it is possible that their idea of the date was wrong.

Campbell's report in other particulars, does not bear out the date of the twenty-first. He speaks of meeting a party of nine Indians on the eighteenth instant, "about *twenty miles below Rock River*," and who left the Americans a few miles below the mouth of Rock river and that the keel boats "proceeded on about four miles and halted." here, he met Black Hawk and one hundred and fifty warriors, women and children. He further says, "we lay at four miles encampment above Rock river until the morning of the twenty-first, when I again put out."

1. Pioneer Life in Illinois. Benjamin Goble.

Had Campbell stayed at "four mile encampment" Rock Island from the eighteenth to the twenty-first, he would have made mention of that fact in his report to General Howard.

The object of this expedition was to give *speedy relief* to the weakened Garrison at Prairie du Chien, and it is not probable that Campbell would idle away two days at Rock Island, when he does not mention any cause for keeping him there.

That they did not stay more than one night at "four mile encampment" is borne out by Black Hawk who in his autobiography says "they (Campbells expedition) remained with us all day" and it was during that night that the Indians got word, that Prairie du Chien had fallen, and it was early in the morning that Black Hawk concluded to attack Campbell's boats, at which time he says, the boats had sailed. Black Hawk says; "They appeared friendly, and were well received. We held a council with the War Chief. We had no intention of hurting him, or any of his party, or we could easily have defeated them. They remained with us all day long, and used and gave us plenty of whisky." (1)

John Reynolds who met the soldiers on their return to St. Louis, who went to see them and talked with them, says that "the boats lay all night at or near the Sac and Fox village at Rock Island" and that "the fleet all set sail in the morning." (2) Davison and Stuve also state that the expedition, "laid up for a night." (3)

The Pioneer History of Illinois also fixes the date of the battle as July 19, 1814. (4)

The attack on Prairie du Chien commenced at half past one o'clock in the afternoon of July 17; Captain Yeizer's Gun Boat "Governor Clark" was attacked at three o'clock (5) and was struck several times when it was concluded to move down the river which was done and the "Governor Clark" started that afternoon (the seventeenth) for St. Louis running through a line of the enemy's fire for nearly nine miles, and it is safe to presume that Yeizer and his crew wasted no time in getting to St. Louis, where they arrived on Sunday the twenty-sixth, two days after Rector's arrival, making the distance of five hundred and six miles in nine days, an average of fifty-five miles each day. (6) Captain Yeizer and his boats "lay to" over the night of the 19th, and the other boats undoubtedly rowed such parts of the night as it was possible for them to proceed. (7)

1. Autobiography of Black Hawk, page 57.

2. Reynolds, ("My Own Times") page 409.

3. Davison & Stuve's History of Illinois, page 279.

4. Pioneer History of Illinois, (Reynolds) page 409.

5. Letter of Captain Yeizer to Governor Clark at St. Louis, July 28, 1814.

6. Western Annals, (1857) page 913.

7. Missouri Gazette, July 30, 1814.

7. McAfee's History of the Late War, page 443.

Black Hawk after the battle came down the river landing on the western shore, opposite the lower end of Rock Island where he made his camp, using the "new lodges" (tents captured on Campbell's barge) he hoisted the British flag and the Indians danced over the scalps taken from Campbell's Regulars, while dancing he says several boats came down the river among them one having "big guns." (1) These boats were Yeizer's Gun Boat "Governor Clark" and the sutlers and Contractors barges which left Prairie du Chien together on the afternoon of the seventeenth, Yeizer on approaching the Rock Island Rapids sent his skiff with nine men to reconnoiter these men discovered Riggs boat engaged with the Indians and Campbells boat on fire. These appearances induced the boats crew to return. Before dispatching the men in the skiff to reconnoiter, Yeizer had joined the Sutlers and the contractors barges. (2) During this time Lieutenant Riggs had cleared his boat and started down the river and later in the evening Captain Yeizer and his boats came down the river passing Black Hawk's Camp during the Scalp dance.

The official report of the British officer commanding at Prairie du Chien, states that in the afternoon when the "Governor Clark" had cut her cables and run down the river, that he sent two boats in pursuit; that these boats had a slight engagement with the "Clark," and followed her till within one league of the Rock River rapids, so that it is safe to presume that Captain Yeizer wasted no time in his trip from Prairie du Chien to where he reached Campbell's Island, and that he arrived there on the evening of the nineteenth.

Thus Black Hawk's account as dictated nineteen years after the engagement at Campbell's Island fully corroborates the account given by Captain Yeizer to the St. Louis newspapers about a week after the battle, and shows that the battle at Campbell's Island was on the nineteenth.

These keel boats did not travel nights, they either anchored in the stream, or tied up on some small Island or secluded spot on the shore, and it would have been an impossibility for Rector's boat having his Company of Rangers, Campbell's Regulars, the sutler, the women and the wounded and dead on board to have traveled from Campbell's Island to St. Louis, a distance of five hundred miles in three days, to do this they must have averaged one hundred and sixty-eight miles a day.

Lieutenant Campbell makes his report to General Howard from St. Louis under date of July 24, 1814, and if his dates are correct he

1. Autobiography of Black Hawk, (1834) page 59.
2. Missouri Gazette, July 30, 1814.

must have traveled from Campbell's Island to St. Louis during the time from Thursday evening, July 21, to Sunday, July 24, clearly an utter impossibility.

Francis Heitman who published under an act of Congress "A Historical Register of the United States Army," gives the date of this battle as July 19, and in his reference to Lieutenant Campbell and Dr. Stewart states they were wounded at this engagement on that day.

Black Hawk was mistaken when he says the party from Prairie du Chien told him that the fort had been taken. His autobiography was dictated nineteen years after the event happened, he may have forgotten, whether they said the fort was *taken* or *attacked*, and it is more than probable that the message conveyed to Black Hawk was purposely exaggerated to incite Black Hawk to more readily join the British, furthermore Prairie du Chien capitulated on the twenty-first, the same day as the battle of Campbell's Island.

In view of the above facts there can be no question but that the battle at Campbell's Island occurred Tuesday, July 19, 1814.

Wrongly Named.

The thought may possibly suggest itself to the reader that Campbell's Island is a misnomer. That the Island should have been named Rector's Island, or Rigg's Island, as the latter were more valorous and did more useful and gallant service.

Those who know the history of this battle know to whom common justice will assign the meed of praise. Lieutenant Campbell was unfortunate, at the commencement the enemy's bullets laid him low before he could distinguish himself. Yet his commanding officer General Howard, in his report dated August 1, 1814 to the Hon. John Armstrong, Secretary of War sounds Campbell's deserved praise, he says "*the intrepid conduct of Major Campbell was such as might be expected from his known character for bravery, combined with experience.*"

That our Government does not forget its heroes, we need but refer to the records of the War Department, on the roll of honor, we find a list of officers on whom brevets were conferred by the President for "gallant action, or meritorious conduct." During the four years of the war of 1812, the President of the United States specially honored 150 officers, among that roster we find in 1814 the names of,

Stephen Rector
Jonathan Riggs.

Might have been Worse.

Campbell's expedition though disastrous, probably prevented a more wholesale butchery of American soldiers. Colonel McCay who captured Prairie du Chien, and Lieutenant Perkins and his sixty-six soldiers, two women and one child, intended to keep the prisoners until he had information of Campbell's expedition and if Campbell's boats came to Prairie du Chien and fired a single shot, he intended sacrificing the Americans to the Indians. (1)

The "Governor Clark."

For those times the "Governor Clark" was quite a formidable boat, and a description of her as written by a British officer at the time she was at Prairie du Chien may be of interest.

She mounted fourteen pieces of cannon, some six, three and a number of coehorns, and when manned carried some seventy or eighty men with fire arms, and measures seventy feet keel. This floating

block house is so constructed that she can be rowed in any direction, the men on board being perfectly safe from small arms while they can use their own to the greatest advantage. She goes remarkably fast, particularly down the current, being rowed by thirty-two oars. (2)

Biographical.

I have tried to trace the history of the brave men who took part in this sanguinary battle, but have been unable to glean but little, and that which I have found, I discovered as it were piece meal, here and there, I give what it has been my good fortune to learn, regretting that accounts and records of the early days in the "Far West" are so meager and uncertain.

The army record as given below is taken from "Heitman,s Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army," and "Hamersly's Army Register of the United States."

Captain John Campbell.

The commander was born in Virginia and entered the army at an early age. he was commissioned an Ensign in the First Regiment of Infantry (Regular Army) on June 13, 1808, and served in this regiment

1. Wisconsin Historical Series, Vol. XI, page 268.
2. Wisconsin Historical Series, Vol. XI, page 264.

until his discharge. On December 31, 1809, he was promoted to a second lieutenant; on January 20, 1813, he was commissioned a first lieutenant; and on May 2, 1814, was promoted to a captaincy; and saw considerable of Indian war fare. In the year 1811 he was engaged in erecting small block houses or family forts in the center and southern part of the State of Illinois, one of which on the west bank of the Illinois river (Prairie Marcot) nineteen miles above its mouth, he garrisoned for some time, with a force of seventeen men. (1)

During the expedition which ended in the engagement at Campbell's Island, and in which he was twice wounded, he was acting Brigade Major and is referred to by his fellow officers as Major. In his report of the Campbell's Island engagement which he makes to General Howard, his commanding officer, under date of July 24, 1814, he signs himself "First Lieutenant, U. S. I.," yet the army records show that on May 2, of that year, he had been commissioned a captain. It is likely that his commission had not arrived at the time he left St. Louis, on the trip that ended so disastrous to him and his companions. He was honorably discharged from the service on June 15, 1815.

Lieutenant Stephen Rector.

Was also a Virginian, and was commissioned a lieutenant of Rangers on August 1, 1813, and brevent second lieutenant, July 13, 1814. A writer on early Illinois History gives an interesting sketch of the Rector family, which is worthy of reproduction, he says:

"The family in Illinois was numerous and conspicuous in pioneer times. There were nine brothers and four daughters of the family. They were born in Farquier County, Virginia, and many of them were raised there. Some of them had emigrated to Ohio and others to Illinois. The family was singular and peculiar in their traits of character. They were ardent, excitable and enthusiastic in their dispositions. They possessed integrity and honesty of purpose in the highest degree, nature had endowed them with strong and active minds, but their passions at times swept over their judgements like a tempest. They were the most fearless and undaunted people I ever knew. Dangers, perils and even death were amusements for them, when they were excited, they were impulsive and ungovernable, when their passions were enlisted. They were the most devoted and true hearted friends, and the most energetic and impulsive enemies to any one they thought deserved their hatred. The family, in their persons were generally large and formed with perfect manly symmetry. They were noble, com-

1. Davison & Stuve's History of Illinois, pages 250, 251.

manding and elegant in their bearing, and their personal appearance, was for manly beauty, not surpassed in the territory. They possessed an exquisite and high sense of honor and chivalry. An insult was never offered to any one of them that went unpunished. "The whole Rector family were patriotic and were always willing and ready on all proper occasions, to shed their blood in the defense of their country." (1)

Lieutenant Stephen Rector was honorably discharged June 15, 1815.

Lieutenant Jonathan Riggs.

Was a Missourian and enlisted in the Rangers, and on March 26, 1814, he was commissioned an ensign; on July 13, 1814, he was commissioned brevet third lieutenant; and on the same day was made a second lieutenant.

He was honorably discharged on June 15, 1815, and died February 20, 1834.

Lieutenant John Weaver.

Was a Kentuckian, and was made an ensign in the seventh regiment (Regulars) of Infantry on February 10, 1812; on March 12, 1813, he was promoted to a third lieutenant; on October 11, of the same year he became a second lieutenant; and on May 15, 1814 he was commissioned a first lieutenant; he was honorably discharged on June 15, 1815 and died August 29, 1821.

Dr. Abraham Stewart.

Was born in Massachusetts and was commissioned a garrison surgeon's mate on March 6, 1806; wounded at battle of Campbell's Island July 19, 1814, and resigned from the service March 20, 1816.

Black Hawk.

The subject of this sketch was a Sac (Sauk) Indian and was born at the Indian village near the mouth of Rock river, in 1767, and died at his home on the Des Moines river bottoms, Davis County, Iowa, on October 3, 1838, in his seventy-first year. His Indian name was Makataimeshekiakiak, or Black Sparrow Hawk, commonly called Black Hawk.

Black Hawk's father, Py-e-sa was the Medicine man of the Sacs and consequently Black Hawk although in after years a War Chief could not boast of princely blood, he was a made, not a born Chief

1. Pioneer History of Illinois, (Reynold's) page 352.

Of his history we must rely mostly altogether upon his own statements. In 1833, directly after the Black Hawk war, the then old Chief dictated to J. B. Patterson, an account of his life. Antoine Le Claire for many years an honored and prominent citizen of Davenport Iowa, and who was United States Interpreter for the Sacs and Foxes at Fort Armstrong on Rock Island at this time, acted as interpreter.

This autobiography was first published in book form in 1834. Since which time various editions have been published, as well also numerous books and articles about and referring to Black Hawk.

Some of the writers have undertaken to make a hero of the Sac chief, others with equal zeal have tried hard to picture him a villain, few seemed to understand that Black Hawk was a Red man, born and reared among a savage race, whose instincts, passions, and desires were inherited. Whose companions and people were like him and whose surroundings and conditions were not such as those enjoyed, who would undertake to portray his character.

To write a biography of an Indian is a difficult task. It matters not how eventful his life or how distinguished his services, it is seldom that any but the most prominent events are remembered. Having no means of recording events, all of the facts and deeds of every day life that go towards the making of character are soon forgotten.

The information we receive is mostly all from those whose knowledge of early Indian character was obtained from such intercourse with the Red man, as these people had when they fought the Indians, and when they drove them from their homes.

In 1783, while in his fifteenth year, Black Hawk accompanied his father as a volunteer on an expedition against the Osages. In the battle that followed, Black Hawk says, "Standing by my father's side, I saw him kill his antagonist, and tear the scalp from his head. Fired with valor and ambition, I rushed furiously upon another, smote him to the earth with my tomahawk, run my lance through his body, took off his scalp and returned in triumph to my father." Upon arriving home the young Sac was for the first time allowed to join in the scalp dance.

We who today are living on the soil that Black Hawk and his people once held as their own, possibly shudder at the thought of a fifteen year old boy killing a human being, and then deliberately cutting off from the head, part of the scalp, but we must remember that this Indian boy's father did the same, all his companions believed it right. In Indian life it was an heroic deed, and we must judge the young Sac according to his surroundings.

History tells us that a youth was once sent with food to his brothers who were off fighting the battles of their Country, that while in Camp he engaged in single combat, the Champion of the enemy, that he slew him and that he drew the slain enemy's sword from his sheath "and cut off his head therewith."

In each case these youths did what their fathers had done before them and what their surroundings and their social and family life taught.

David became great in Israel, Black Hawk was driven from his home and has been denounced because he did that which in his time, among his people, he was taught was right.

I only cite this case to show that criticism of character and of deed should at least be governed both by circumstances and surroundings. The age we live in and its civilization should be the standard.

Black Hawk from his last exploit gained considerable reputation as a brave among his people, and in the course of a few months led a party of seven against the Osages. The enemy numbered a hundred. Black Hawk attacked them, he himself killing one man and then successfully led a retreat arriving home without any loss. This last engagement he says gained him "great applause" and before a great while he was enabled to raise a party of one hundred warriors with which he again marched against The Osages, whose Country was on the borders of the Missouri river.

They found the village of the enemy deserted, which caused disappointment among the Sacs and all but five braves returned home, at the head of this little band Black Hawk says he "took to the trail of our enemies," they killed one man and a boy, and then returned home.

After this for some time Black Hawk was not able to muster any force with which to fight, but in his nineteenth year he was again at the head of two hundred warriors. The Sacs and Foxes met the enemy in the latter's Country, both parties were evenly matched, and both fought desperately. The Sacs and Foxes triumphed and put the Osages to flight. Black Hawk says the enemy lost about one hundred, of whom he killed six one of whom was a squaw, whose death was accidental.

His next expedition was against the Cherokees, who had murdered some of the Sac women and children. Black Hawk's father Py-e-sa was in command of this party. They met near the Merrimac river. The enemy was much stronger than the Sacs and Foxes, Py-e-sa was mortally wounded and Black Hawk assumed command; the Sacs and Foxes were victorious, killing twenty-eight of the enemy. Black Hawk killing three. The Sacs and Foxes losing but seven men.

At the close of the battle, Py-e-sa died and Black Hawk says,,, I now fell heir to the Great Medicine bag of my forefathers, which had belonged to my father."

Black Hawk returned to his village sad and sorrowful, blackened his face, and "fasted and prayed to the Great Spirit for five years."

During this time the Osages again began killing the Sac and Foxes and Black Hawk once more started out with a war party, but only found six of the enemy and he says, "Their forces being so weak, I thought it would be cowardly to kill them. but took them prisoners and carried them to our Spanish Father at St. Louis, gave them up to him and then returned to our village."

Upon his arrival home he determined on the final extermination of the Osages for the injuries that had been done by this tribe to his nation, and he immediately commenced recruiting a strong force, and in the Spring of that year with five hundred Sacs and Foxes and one hundred Iowas he marched against the enemy. one afternoon just about sun down he came upon a village of Osages containing forty lodges. Black Hawk's band attacked the village and it is said killed all of the inhabitants excepting two squaws, whom they made prisoners.

On returning home, the killing of his father by the Cherokees so weighed upon his mind that he became anxious to avenge his fathers death, and determined to annihilate the Cherokee nation. He recruited a large number of warriors, and started upon his trip but was unable to find any of his old enemies. His band, however captured five Cherokees; four men and one woman, the former he released, and the latter a young squaw, he brought home. He says, "Great as was my hatred for this people, I could not kill so small a party." From this time until 1811 the Sacs and the Foxes were engaged in various battles with the Osages and the Cherokees, and an occasional engagement with the American settlers and soldiers. During the year 1811, Black Hawk and his party made an unsuccessful attack on Fort Madison. Early in the year of 1812, our government requested the presence of some of the Indians, at Washington; On their return they stated "that their Great Father wished them in the event of war taking place between the United States and England, not to interfere on either side, but to remain neutral, that he did not want their help but wished them to hunt, and support their families and live in peace."

Black Hawk says that the Americans promised to furnish them with goods and that when they went to the trader at Fort Madison, he told them that "he had received no instructions to furnish them anything on credit, nor could he give them anything, without receiving the pay for them on the spot." The Indians left the Fort dissatisfied.

Alliance with the British.

The next morning a canoe arrived, bringing a messenger with the news that LaGutrie (Girty), a British trader, had landed at Rock Island with two boats, loaded with goods, and that he requested the Indians to come up immediately, that he had good news for them and a variety of presents. The Indians immediately started for Rock Island, upon their arrival Girty divided between them two boat loads of provisions, supplies and other articles as presents. Girty told them that Col. Dickson wanted Black Hawk to raise a party of warriors and to proceed with them to Green Bay where they would meet Dickson. The Indians readily agreed to this. Black Hawk says: "here ended all hopes of our remaining at peace, having been forced into war by being deceived." A party of two hundred warriors were soon gathered, and with Black Hawk at their head they proceeded to Green Bay where Dickson had collected a large number of Indians and British soldiers.

Upon his arrival at Green Bay, Black Hawk was cordially received by Colonel Dickson, who told him that the Americans wanted to take his Country from him, and that his English Father had sent him, (Dickson) and his braves to drive the Americans back to their own Country. He placed a medal around Black Hawk's neck, gave him a certificate of good behavior and a silk flag, and told Black Hawk that he was to command a party of braves, who would leave the next day for Detroit. This flag, medal and certificate were carefully preserved, until at the battle of the Bad Ax in 1832, when Black Hawk lost them, they being afterwards found on the battle ground. (1)

Black Hawk says he was much disappointed, as he wanted to descend the Mississippi and make war upon the settlements. Dickson however, said he had been ordered to lay the country waste around St. Louis, but that there were no soldiers there now, and that Black Hawk should go where there were plenty of soldiers. The next day Black Hawk, with five hundred Indians started on his march to join the British at Detroit, and passed Chicago a few days after the Massacre at Fort Dearborn. Black Hawk took part in the battle of the Thames, October 5, 1813. after which he returned home. The next engagement of any note that the "British band" took part in, was what is commonly called the battle of the "Sink Hole" where he had a severe encounter with United States Rangers, in which one Indian was killed. From this time until the battle at Campbell's Island, nothing of any consequence occurred in the life of Black Hawk.

1. Drake's "Life of Black Hawk," page 79.

Indian Life.

"It is due to the Indian character to state, that the only main road for an Indian to distinguish himself and become a great man is in war. So soon as he kills or wounds an enemy, he may paint on his blanket a bloody hand, which will entitle him to a seat in the Councils. This standard of character and honor makes it the duty, rather than a crime, of an Indian to appear foremost in the ranks of the war-parties, so that he may be a warrior, and not such a bad character as he is sometimes esteemed by the whites." (1)

Indian life consisted of hunting and fishing and making war, the latter being the great business of their life. And when in 1812, while in Washington the representatives of the Sac and Fox nation offered their assistance to the United States, and it was declined, they felt that they ought as a matter of course take sides with one party or the other, and when they afterwards went to St. Louis and again offered their services to our Government and which offer was also declined, they very naturally, when the British agents came to them with flattering offers, listened to their words, which resulted in inducing a part of the Sac and Fox nation to espouse their cause and take sides with the British. This number did not greatly exceed two hundred. Black Hawk was their leader, and this band became the famous "British Band."

His Character.

The best criticism that has been passed upon Black Hawk is by Reuben Gold Thwaites, a gentleman whose life has been given to the study of Northwest history and whose writings clearly rank him the foremost scholar in the history of our early Northwest.

He says "Black Hawk was an indiscreet man His troubles were, in the main, the result of lack of mental balance, aided largely by untoward circumstances. He was of a highly romantic temperament; his judgement was warped by sentiment; and tricksters easily played upon this weakness. But he was honest, more honorable, often than those who were his conquerors. He was above all things a *patriot*. In the year before his death, he made a speech to a party of whites, who were making a holiday hero of him, and thus forcibly defended his motives; "Rock river was a beautiful country. I liked my town, my cornfields, and the home of my people. I fought for them." No poet could have penned for him a more touching epitaph. (2)

1. "My Own Times," (Reynolds) page 204.

2. Essays in Western History; How George Rogers Clark won the Northwest, (Thwaites) page 196.

In his domestic relations, Black Hawk was a kind husband and an affectionate father, and while polygamy was practiced among the Sac and Foxes and other Indians, Black Hawk never had but one wife. After his return from his campaign in 1813, his first act was to go to his home and he says, "I then started to visit my wife and children, I found them well and my boys were growing finely. It is not customary for us to say much about our women, as they generally perform their part cheerfully, and never interfere with business belonging to the men. This is the only wife I ever had, or will ever have. She is a good women, and teaches my boys to be brave." (1)

His Religion.

In his autobiography, Black Hawk in speaking of his starting in pursuit of Campbell's party says; that he thought probably the GREAT SIRIT would put them in our power, if he wished them taken, and afterwards in speaking of the engagement says, "This boat the GREAT SPIRIT gave us."

In numerous places in his autobiography he mentions the GREAT SPIRIT, and there is no question but that he and his people were greatly influenced by their religious belief.

In speaking of their religion he says: "Every one makes his feast as he thinks best to please the GREAT SPIRIT, who has the care of all beings created;" some believe in two spirits, one good and one bad, and make feasts for the bad spirit to keep him quiet.

In a further discussion of this question he said: "For my part I am of opinion that so far as we have REASON, we have a right to use it in determining what is right or wrong, and should pursue that path which we believe to be right, believing that whatever is, is right,—if the GREAT and GOOD SPIRIT wished us to believe and do as the Whites, he could easily change our opinions, so that we would think, and act as they do. We are nothing compared to his power, and we feel and know it. We have men among us like the Whites, who pretend to know the right path, but will not consent to show it without pay, I have no faith in their paths—but believe that every man must make his own path."

"We thank the GREAT SPIRIT for all the benefits he has conferred upon us, for myself, I never take a drink of water from a spring without being mindful for his goodness."

A writer, who visited the Sacs and Foxes in the early part of the last century and who made their life a study, in speaking of their

1. Autobiography of Black Hawk, pages 77, 78.

religion says, "They believe in one GREAT and GOOD SPIRIT, who controls and governs all things, and supernatural agents who are permitted to interfere in their concerns. They are of opinion that there is also a bad spirit, subordinate, however to the great Manito, who is permitted to annoy and perplex the Indians, by means of bad medicines, by poisonous reptiles, and by killing their horses and sinking their canoes. All their misfortunes are attributed to the influence of this bad spirit, but they have some vague idea that it is in part permitted as a punishment for their bad deeds. They all believe in ghosts, and when they fancy that they have seen one, the friends of the deceased give a feast and hand up some clothing as an offering to appease the troubled spirit. So far as the ceremonies are concerned, the Sacs and Foxes may be called a religious people. They rarely pass any extraordinary cave, rock, hill or other object, without leaving behind them some tobacco for the use of the spirit who they suppose lives there. They have some kind of prayers, consisting of words which they sing over in the evening and at sunrise in the morning." (1)

Note.

It was not my purpose to write a biography of Black Hawk, I believed that a short sketch of his life up to the time of the battle of Campbell's Island would be of interest to all those who cared to read the history of that ill fated expedition. Black Hawk's career from 1814 to 1832, which includes the rivalry and jealousies between him and the Fox Chief, Keokuk for leadership of the allied tribes, the causes leading up to the Black Hawk war. The unfortunate killing of the bearer of a flag of truce and the attack upon a party suing for peace, which precipitated a war that could have been averted, would require more space than I am able to assign to this subject at this time.

In this sketch I wished merely to note a few of the important events in the life of a Red man who though not born in the purple yet rose to the command of his people and has made a name in history that is both more widely condemned and equally more widely and more fervently praised, than any other one of his Race, in the Country he lived in.

1. Drake's Life of Black Hawk, page 36

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 009 761 789 2 ●

